

Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit

The Promise of the Father

The Bible is a book of promises. Why do people fail to claim them? They either don't know or they don't believe the wonderful gifts God has prepared. Here is one of the most powerful promises of all: that God will send the Holy Spirit into our lives with power, guidance, and wisdom.

There are many misconceptions concerning this subject of the Holy Spirit. We need to be clear on what the Word of God says about His Spirit. Jesus told His disciples, **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

In **Luke 24:49**, Jesus told His disciples that they would be ready to serve Him only after He clothed them with power through the Holy Spirit. That promise applies to every single believer. You and I have the amazing privilege of walking in the power and guidance of God's Spirit.

The Holy Spirit always points to Jesus.

John 14-16 offers us the promise of the Father concerning the Spirit. Jesus clearly teaches that the Spirit performs many functions within us—guiding us, teaching us, encouraging us, and convicting us of every sin we commit. He never speaks of Himself, only of Jesus. **(John 16:13-14)** His mission is to magnify Christ in the life of the believer. No person can live a life pleasing to Jesus apart from the filling and guidance of the Holy Spirit, because He is the one who points us to God's Son in the midst of everything we do.

The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity.

God is one deity whom we know in three aspects. This is the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We read in **John 14:16-17** that Jesus the Son will ask the Father to send another Helper (the Holy Spirit). That is one of the Bible's many expressions of our triune God. He is one in mind, in spirit, and in plan, but He expresses himself in those three persons and the roles they fulfill. The Father sits in heaven upon His throne; the Son sits at His Father's right hand; and the Spirit dwells within every believer.

The Holy Spirit is a person.

Many people think of the Holy Spirit as some kind of thing or force that they can feel. The Spirit is not a thing or a force but a person: He is not something but **Someone**. The Spirit of God is a personality fully endowed with emotion, knowledge, and will. In many verses throughout the New Testament, we read about the Spirit of God in terms of His personality and His will—as someone, for example, who can be **“grieved.”** The Holy Spirit is a person. He is, in fact, the person of God as He comes to live within us.

No one can be a Christian without this personal indwelling.

The Holy Spirit is God's seal of ownership on you.

In **Ephesians 1:13**, we read that as believers we are sealed in Christ **“with the Holy Spirit of promise.”** What does it mean to be sealed by the Holy Spirit? God places His Spirit within us so that we may be a part of Him and that He may be a part of us. The Spirit serves as God's pledge or token of our inheritance— a symbol of who we are, and His future glorification through us. **Ephesians 4:30** adds that we were **“sealed for the day of redemption.”** This truth assures us of our eternal security. Though we sin, we still belong to Him, and He still lives within us. When we bear the seal of God's ownership through the Holy Spirit, we can never lose the gift of salvation.

The Holy Spirit helps you.

Every man or woman needs help in life. Jesus said, **“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper” (John 14:16).** The Holy Spirit will help us any time we cry out to Him. He knows our every circumstance, and He knows what we should do. There is no problem in all of life for which the Spirit does not offer His help and His encouragement: temptation, trials, criticism, or any other challenge we may face. He may change the person before the problem, but He always provides the help we need.

The Holy Spirit guides you.

Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and that He will guide us into all truth. **(John 16:13)** When you and I struggle with decisions, we know the Holy Spirit will guide us toward the right choices. He has access to all of the truth and all of the facts. His guidance may seem strange at times, but this is because He has all of the facts and we do not. The Bible promises that if we trust in the Lord with all our heart, lean not on our own understanding, and acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will guide us. **(Proverbs 3:5-6)**

The Holy Spirit teaches you.

We learn in **1 John 2:27** that only the Spirit of God can be our teacher. The Lord often teaches His wisdom through human speakers, but only He is fit to teach us. The Holy Spirit interprets the truth as He applies it individually to our hearts, so that it will fit our needs perfectly. No element of His teaching will ever be inconsistent with His eternal Word. God will never contradict Himself; instead, He will take His unchanging truth and apply it to the areas within us where we need to grow.

The Holy Spirit is the source of your spiritual power.

The Holy Spirit is the power, energy, and authority of God at work in the world through you and me. That is, the power of the Holy Spirit is God's divine energy and authority released for godly living and fruitful service. My friend, this means that as you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, you speak with the authority of God. You move and act in His power. Your whole life pulses with His energy and love for all His children, as well as His heart's desire to see everyone come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The

world's power runs dry, but the power of God through the Holy Spirit overflows eternally.

Conclusion:

I pray that as you seek the wisdom of God's Word concerning His promise of the Holy Spirit, you ask yourself this question: What is it that I want for my life?

Do you want to know the joy of God maximizing every gift, every hope, and every potential for each day? Do you want to draw from the infinite well of His wisdom and guidance for every problem you could possibly face?

On the other hand, would you rather wander through life simply doing your best on your own strength, struggling with every obstacle, and relying on the limited resources of your own humanity?

To overlook the gift and promise of the Holy Spirit in your life is more than simply an unfortunate choice. It is rebellion against the will and Word of God. He wants you to have all the joy, all the wisdom, and all of His power and authority to live the victorious life that is His will for every single believer—and His promise for your life at this very moment.

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The Mission of the Spirit

Have you ever wondered why two Christians can seem so completely different in their faith? The answer is the relationship that person or their church has with the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is at the center of all that we do and all that we believe as Christians. Yet many believers have no idea who He is and why He came. Jesus gave His disciples a clear explanation of why the Holy Spirit was sent: **“He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment” (John 16:8).** The Spirit has always been in this world to carry out the ministry of the Father. **Now He lives within the heart of every single believer, and we cannot live the exciting, fulfilling Christian life unless we understand His presence and ministry.**

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is essential to your salvation.

Many Christians do not realize that the Holy Spirit plays a vital part in their salvation. It is He who creates the desire in a person’s heart for salvation. In **John 6:44**, Jesus said that no one can come to Him unless He is drawn, and the Spirit is the one who draws us. **Romans 3:10-11** tells us that lost people have no desire for God. This is because they have been blinded by Satan. Unless the Spirit of God works in a person’s heart, that person is blind to the truth of the gospel. **All that we understand about Christ and His love for us comes through the ministry of the Spirit of God who unveils our eyes.**

The Holy Spirit illuminates your mind to the truth.

Why do believers understand the truth of the gospel while non-Christians seem so confused by the same concepts? This is because the natural man, as described in **1 Corinthians 2:14**, **“does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”** The believer may try to explain his faith, but the words make no sense to the nonbeliever. The Christian, on the other hand, has the Holy Spirit to teach and to help us

understand what He teaches. We cannot understand the Scriptures without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who takes every word and helps us to grasp its truth and its application to our lives.

The Holy Spirit convicts your conscience.

Why are Christians so much more conscious of sin than non-believers? Through the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit, we begin to read and to understand the Scriptures. Soon we are feeling guilt for the sins in our life. The Spirit leads us to confess and repent of these sins. Non-believers feel no guilt because the Spirit is not there to convict them. The conviction of sin comes as a natural result of His illumination of the truth. We only need a small amount of His light to begin to feel this conviction. **But those who reject the Spirit's conviction of sin begin to harden their hearts against God.** They suppress the leadings of the Holy Spirit, and this is rebellion against Him.

The Holy Spirit gives the gift of repentance and the gift of faith.

The next step in the work of the Spirit is the desire for repentance and the gift of faith. Yes, even our faith is a gift we could not enjoy without the indwelling Holy Spirit who gives us the power to believe. **“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).** We would never have the strength to turn away from sin without the help of the Holy Spirit. We repent because we believe. **We cannot have repentance or faith without the other.**

The Holy Spirit grants new life.

Jesus told Nicodemus, **“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).** When our minds have been illuminated, our conscience has been convicted, and we have received the gifts of faith and repentance, we are able to live a new life in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the Spirit's work of regeneration. The believer becomes a new creature, a child of the Spirit and not the flesh, and capable of living to serve and to please God rather than to please his own carnal cravings. This new and victorious life is not available to anyone who is not indwelt by the Spirit of God. Therefore, all these gifts are part of the first reason that Christ sent us the Holy Spirit: His ministry is our salvation.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is essential to your sanctification.

The meaning of the word **“sanctification”** is holiness, which means something that has been set apart for a special purpose. The moment we trust Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are sanctified positionally. This means we have the position of sanctification. There is also the progressive sanctification of the Holy Spirit—His work in making us more conformed to the image of God's Son day by day. The Spirit is working all the time in order to bring us into a relationship of intimacy with Him so that our character, conduct, and conversation begin to reflect the character of Jesus. The Holy Spirit weeds out those things that don't belong in our life, and begins to develop the fruit listed in **Galatians 5:22.**

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is essential to your service.

Salvation is an act of faith. Sanctification is the walk of faith. Finally, service is faith in the Spirit to help us do what He has called us to do. **Ephesians 2:10** says that **“we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”** Every single believer is a servant of God set apart for these works. Godly service is our spiritual responsibility, and the Spirit of God will enable us to accomplish these tasks. When serving in the power of the Holy Spirit we may tire but we will not burn out; face obstacles but not be discouraged; be forced to wait but not manipulate; feel pressure but not become desperate; feel helpless but not hopeless; feel wronged but not retaliate. **The Holy Spirit has a clear mission in your life and in mine, and the Word of God helps us to understand exactly what that mission is.**

Conclusion:

God is looking for men and women who are willing to humble themselves before Him and acknowledge their absolute dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Those people will be successful in whatever they do, because God never fails. Consider that the disciples saw every miracle of Jesus and heard every word of His teaching, but they were helpless until the Spirit came. He gave them a challenge the world would consider ridiculous: to go into every corner of the world and make disciples of all nations. **(Matthew 28:19-20)** Such a task was possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

My brethren, you will be surprised and delighted when you learn what God will do in your life when you make yourself fully available to the indwelling Spirit. You and I want to come to the end of life and say that as best we knew how, we gave ourselves wholly to God. The presence and the power of the Holy Spirit make it a living reality.

Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit

The Gifts of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit has provided believers with spiritual gifts that are perfectly suited for God's plan for their life.

It's a shame that we see so many believers live their lives without ever finding and using their gifts. They wonder why they're not more effective. The reason is that they haven't made use of these wonderful gifts from the Holy Spirit.

Why should we settle for guessing how God would have us serve? By using the gifts He has specifically given you, you will fit into the body of Christ exactly as you were meant to fit. You will serve at the highest level of effectiveness, and experience wonderful unity with other believers.

Why are there so many misunderstandings in the Christian world concerning the use of our gifts in order to serve God? We learn in **1 Corinthians 12:1-7** exactly how God uses our spiritual gifts.

Clarification of terms.

It is important to understand the meanings of the key words we use when we discuss the gifts of the Holy Spirit. First, there is the gift of the Spirit. **The person of the Holy Spirit Himself is a gift to every believer, given at the moment of salvation.** There are also the gifts (plural) of the Holy Spirit—those special abilities God gives to each individual to fit His purpose for that person's life. These are not the same as the fruit of the Spirit, as listed in **Galatians 5:22-23**. Those are elements of the character that the Holy Spirit wants to build in and through every life.

Natural talents and spiritual gifts.

There is also a very important distinction **between** the **natural talents** every person has and the **spiritual gifts** that the Holy Spirit gives to us. A natural talent is given to each individual at birth. Perhaps it is a musical talent or athletic ability. These are wonderful opportunities in themselves to honor God. Spiritual gifts, **on the other hand**,

are administered by the Holy Spirit specifically for His service through the body of Christ, which is the church. All people have natural talents and abilities. **Christians are given at least one spiritual gift to serve God and edify other believers, and each one of us was designed to use this special gift.**

Categories of spiritual gifts.

There are three categories of spiritual gifts, given in three lists in the New Testament. According to **1 Corinthians 12:7**, there are gifts that are manifestations of the Spirit for the common good. **Second, Romans 12:4-8** tells us that there are seven motivational gifts. These are the functions of the members of the church. Each of us has one of these gifts. **Third**, according to **Ephesians 4:11-12**, there are gifts given as offices in the church to equip the saints.

Cautions to prevent confusion in our study of gifts.

First, understand that the Holy Spirit gives a specific gift to every believer. **Second**, no individual has all gifts.

Third, the gifts are never given for us to serve or glorify ourselves but are to be employed in serving others. **Fourth**, no one should be told that they have a certain gift. It is the work of God to show us our gifts. **Fifth**, never seek certain gifts. Trust God to give you exactly the gift you need. **Finally**, having a spiritual gift doesn't necessarily make anyone more spiritually-minded.

The gift of healing.

All healing is a gift from God. Preachers or leaders may inspire others to trust God, but they have no special gift for healing. We read in **1 Corinthians 12:28** that there are gifts of healing as opposed to healers. God works miracles throughout Scripture to demonstrate the authenticity of His messengers. Jesus performed healing miracles in order to glorify God and show that He was God's Son. Jesus loved everyone but did not heal all those who were ill. **He healed in response to the faith of the people, and to glorify His Father in heaven.**

The gift of tongues.

According to Scripture, speaking in tongues is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. However, some instances of speaking in tongues is psychologically motivated rather than being the work of the Spirit. Some instances may also be Satanic. The Bible teaches that all gifts are given for the good of the entire body, and on this basis we must evaluate the use of tongues. Pride frequently becomes an issue when tongues are discussed, because people feel proud of having this gift and tend to encourage others to seek it. **Finally, we know that God is not a God of confusion, so disorderly demonstrations are not the authentic work of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:33)**

Responding according to your gifts.

Your spiritual gift will determine the nature of your responses to anything that happens in life. The gift of prophecy may inspire someone to make corrections. Someone with the gift of mercy will want to help the people involved in any way possible. A person with the gift of administration will organize the task and delegate duties. A believer with the gift of service will take personal responsibility to do the work that is needed. Someone with the gift of giving uses generosity to help others. The one with the gift of teaching will communicate the important information involved. A person with the gift of exhortation will encourage the right course of action.

Understanding your gifts.

When we use our gifts, a number of wonderful things happen within us and through us. **First**, we begin to have a new confidence about serving God. **Second**, we will have a new commitment and joy in serving Him, because the use of our gifts brings us joy. **Third**, we start to understand others more as each person responds according to his or her gift. **Finally**, the church begins to function in a way that gives glory to God in a powerful way.

Conclusion:

Among all the wonderful gifts that our gracious God has given us, spiritual gifts may be the most exciting. They define who we are. They tell us how we should be spending our lives. They give us the key to everyday satisfaction, and they make service within the church a great privilege instead of a chore. **Every believer should be profoundly grateful for the gift of the Holy Spirit that he or she has received.** Once we have identified our spiritual gift, we will be on the path to gaining all the joy and fulfillment available to us in loving and serving God.

What about you, my friend? Have you found your own special gift of the Holy Spirit? Is He guiding you to use it every day for the unity and nurturing of all believers around you? Ask God to help you serve Him through serving His church, and to make your spiritual gift your most precious possession.